

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY:  
A DIVERSE FUTURE IN THE USAF IS A BETTER FUTURE

by

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## **Biography**

Lt Col Carolyn F. Ammons is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. She is a career Personnelist with more than 18 years of service in the United States Air Force. Lt Col Ammons has served as a squadron commander and in various duties at the base and wing level; and in staff assignments in a combatant command, Headquarters Air Force and on the Secretary of the Air Force staff. She has also served as a White House Military Social Aide.



## **Abstract**

Throughout the years, the United States Air Force has come to appreciate the value of diversity. Today, the military has improved so much in gender diversity, yet there is still more which can be done. This paper will discuss gender diversity issues, as well as highlight the void of USAF involvement in the international environment of women, peace and security. The overall intent of this paper is to examine current gender diversity programs in the USAF and offer improvements. While then also exploring the next step for female leadership in the USAF and how it can enhance women, peace and security objectives for nation states involved in conflict. This paper uses a programmatic approach to address retention and argues the benefits of USAF diversity and presents clear recommendations on improvements and goals for international impact. The first recommendations involve enhancing work-life balance options to improve the retention issues. The second recommendation addresses the development of recruiting, such as to ensure millennials consider military service a viable option. The third recommendation suggests the development of training, assignment options and various other avenues for the enhancement of women, peace and security. The USAF continues to address and promote gender issues. With increased emphasis on family-life improvements and more robust efforts in the international women, peace and security environment, USAF women can have an impact of greater magnitude. Gender issues must now move from institutionalization to increased action where women in the USAF can demonstrate relevance to the world.

## **Introduction**

Over the course of the last decade of war the US military has come to more clearly appreciate the value women bring to the fight. Progress has been made in numerous areas, such as gender diversity, but more progress can be made, and diversity can have a lasting effect internationally in the area of women, peace and security. Fifteen years ago the UN Security Council recognized the strong links between women, peace and security by enacting Resolution 1325 in October 2000 which was ground breaking in its combination of prevention, protection and participation for women in their nation state. Resolution 1325 “recognized and addressed the different impacts of conflict on women, and acknowledged the need to fully engage women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.”<sup>1</sup> In the international environment, strong leaders have knowledge of history, politics, cultures, religion, economics, and much more. But key to this mix of “smarts” is a drive for improvement through inclusive actions not exclusive action. In this paper, I will show the benefits of gender diversity in the military and how enhancing the roles of women in the USAF lead to stronger societies and more peaceful nations. I will outline a roadmap for the USAF to take diversity’s gains, and the role of women, to bring about a greater impact internationally.

## **Thesis**

This paper will show the benefits of gender diversity in the military and how enhancing the roles of women in the USAF can lead to stronger societies and more peaceful nations. Further it will present a strategy for the USAF to take diversity’s gains and the role of women to be a relevant operational diverse force beyond our nation.

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Butler, Kristina Mader and Rachel Kean; “Women, Peace, and Security Handbook: Compilation and Analysis of United Nations Security Council Resolution Language 2000-2010,” *Publication of the Peace Women Project of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)*, (October 2010), 7.

## **A Diverse Future in the USAF is a Better Future for the World**

### **A Diverse Force is Necessary**

In 2010 Navy Admiral Eric Olsen, Commander US Special Operations Command, began training women to be involved in Cultural Support Teams. He saw the value of adding women to the fight and the critical positive effect they can have because of the benefits of diversity.

Diversity is “the quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas; the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization.”<sup>2</sup>

Diverse backgrounds and experiences create a more effective environment for progress. “The idea and importance of cognitive diversity is nothing new. A 2004 study from researchers at the University of Michigan and Loyola Chicago found that creating groups of individuals who had diverse approaches to problem solving outperformed groups that were made up of only the most talented problem-solvers.”<sup>3</sup> So why not seek to be more diverse? There seems to be only gains, especially for the military, which can be applied in various international environments. Diverse approaches provide more creative options to complex problems. “The challenges we face today are far too serious, and the implications of failure too great, for our Air Force to do less than fully, and inclusively, leverage our Nation’s greatest strength: its remarkably diverse people” which cannot be disputed, as stated by Secretary of the Air Force Deborah James.<sup>4</sup> The Air Force is striving for more diversity because of many complex challenges and opportunities.

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<sup>2</sup> *Webster Dictionary*; “diversity” accessed 11 Oct 15, On-line: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity>.

<sup>3</sup> Gillian B. White, “The Weakening Definition of 'Diversity',” *The Atlantic*, Accessed 11 Oct 15, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/05/the-weakening-definition-of-diversity/393080/>

<sup>4</sup> Secretary Deborah James, Secretary of the United States Air Force, to Memo to All Airmen, 4 Mar 15.

## Gender Diversity Reflected

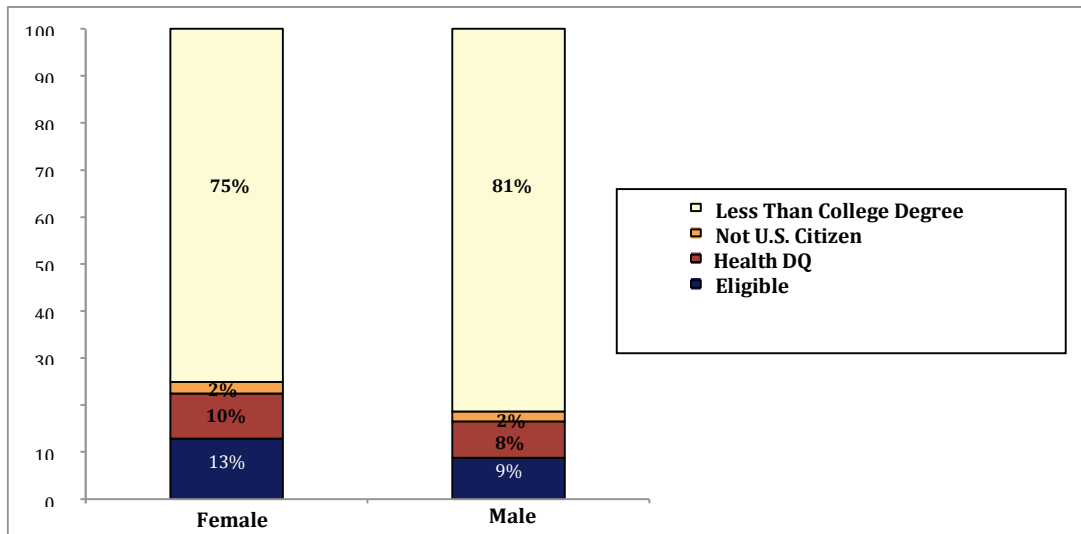
The military is formed from society. American society continues to become more diverse yet the military remains primarily white male dominated. The intent of this paper is not to exclude nor “target” white males, because they do provide diverse backgrounds and experiences. This paper seeks to highlight that the USAF can enhance the force by increasing gender diversity. In a truly diverse force, the diversity of thought grows organically. In order to attract the wider segment of society needed in the military for benefits in the future the USAF must be deliberate in attracting diversity today. The military needs to be representative of the society in which we serve.

According to statistical experts the propensity to serve in America’s military continues to decline<sup>5</sup>. “Overall, the market for youth recruitment has challenges: not only have youth shied away from enlistment, but many are also ineligible for military service. As more youth continue to seek post-secondary education, the pool of possible applicants shrinks. ...and youth remain likely to turn to employment following high school graduation.”<sup>6</sup> See Figure 1.

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Defense Report, *The Defense Science Board Task Force on Human Resources Strategy*, February 2000, <https://books.google.com/books?id=U-uLhDnezi0C&pg=PR7&lpg=PR7&dq=propensity+to+serve+in+America%E2%80%99s+military+continues+to+decline&source=bl&ots=bF5rXk2Lrh&sig=-GYN4htwJqzA1ac6C23cLFfB--Y&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjexaz7zfXKAhXMKyYKHxSTBfYQ6AEIIDAB#v=onepage&q=propensity%20to%20serve%20in%20America%E2%80%99s%20military%20continues%20to%20decline&f=false>, vii.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Defense June 2009 Youth Poll, *June 2009 Youth Poll 17 Report*, Department of Defense Human Resources Activity, Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies, (Arlington, VA), 2-8.



**Figure 1. Disqualification Rates for Officer Requirements by Gender<sup>7</sup>**

Another important factor of youth propensity to serve is those who influence youth. “Veterans, who may positively influence a youth to enlist, are a shrinking population and are expected to decrease by approximately 40 percent over the next 30 years. These trends have changed the landscape of the youth market and increased the difficulty of recruitment.”<sup>8</sup>

The nation is more diverse, “millennials are more diverse than the generations that preceded them, with 44.2 percent being part of a minority race or ethnic group (that is, a group other than non-Hispanic, single-race white).”<sup>9</sup> The US Census Bureau stated “more diverse than millennials are the youngest Americans: those younger than 5 years old. In 2014, this group

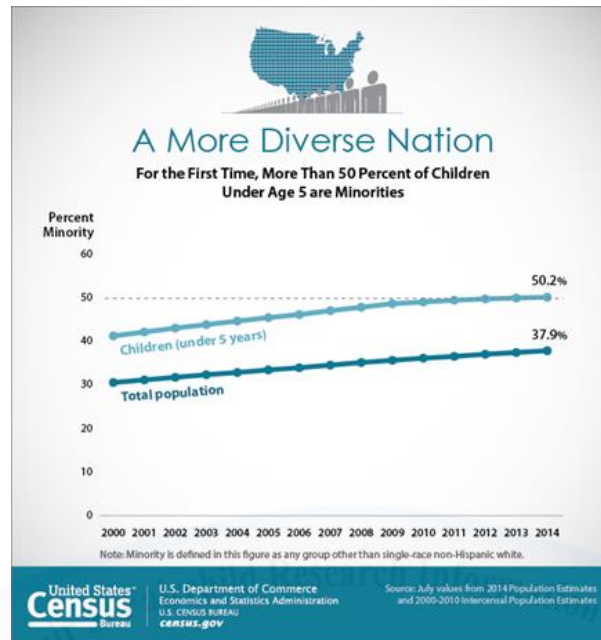
<sup>7</sup> Nelson Lim, Louis T. Mariano, Amy G. Cox, David Schulker, Lawrence M. Hanser, Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps, RAND Corporation, 2014, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense June 2009 Youth Poll, June 2009 Youth Poll 17 Report, Department of Defense Human Resources Activity, Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies, (Arlington, VA), 2-8.

<sup>9</sup> Census Bureau, Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers and Are Far More Diverse, Census Bureau Reports, June 25, 2015, Release Number: CB15-113, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.



became majority-minority for the first time, with 50.2 percent being part of a minority race or ethnic group.”<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 2, Census Bureau).



**Figure 2, Census Bureau Minority Diversity<sup>11</sup>**

In March 2014 the Secretary of the Air Force announced plans to increase female officer applications pools to 30 percent to more closely reflect the eligible population of society. Traditionally the USAF’s application pool for female officers has been 25 percent.<sup>12</sup> In light of the current serving 19 percent of women, which will be discussed later, this is a solid target.

<sup>10</sup> Census Bureau, Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers and Are Far More Diverse, Census Bureau Reports, June 25, 2015, Release Number: CB15-113, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Census Bureau, Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers and Are Far More Diverse, Census Bureau Reports, June 25, 2015, Release Number: CB15-113, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Secretary Deborah James, Secretary of the United States Air Force, to Memo to All Airmen, 4 Mar 15.

## Diversity in the Current Military

In order to have a strong and enduring diverse force the military must have a solid foundation of respect for all. Unlike a standard dictionary definition the USAF goes deeper and broader, a good sign, in defining diversity as:

“a composite of individual characteristics, experiences and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force diversity includes but is not limited to: personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Diversity also is further subdivided into demographic, cognitive, behavioral, organizational/structural and global diversity.”<sup>13</sup>

By this very definition everyone brings diversity to the fight; everyone has different backgrounds, experiences and abilities. But the USAF must measure these and capitalize on the benefits. Diversity is needed in the military to be optimally effective. Gender diversity adds diversity of thought and experience.

Diversity as seen in the USAF definition has a lot of elements, however this discussion will focus primarily on gender issues. As of September 30, 2015, the active duty component of the USAF was 19.1 percent women; for the officer corps 20.3 percent and for the enlisted corps 18.8 percent were women; with a total USAF female population of 58,656.<sup>14</sup> USAF civilians had a higher female percentage at 29.2 percent female versus 70.8 percent male. As of 2015 the Air Force Reserve was 26.6 percent female and the Air National Guard was 18.5 percent.<sup>15</sup> For officers, females typically have a huge retention problem at the 10-12 year point of service when

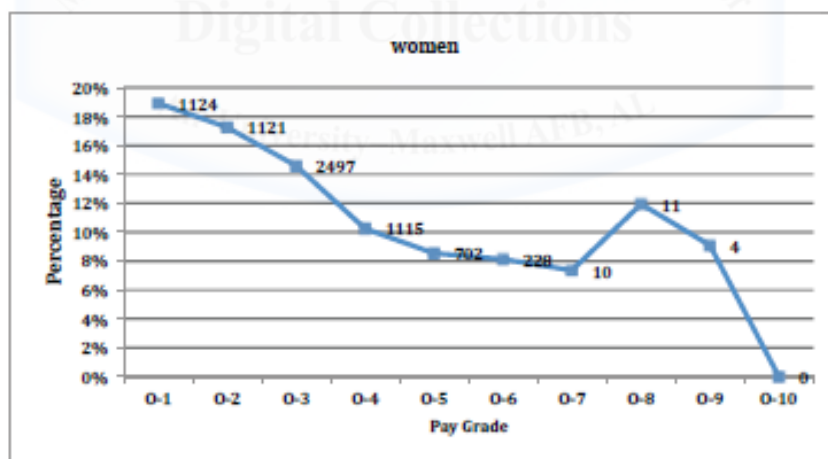
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<sup>13</sup> Department of Defense, *United States Air Force Diversity Strategic Roadmap*, Air Force Global Diversity Division, 12 March 2013, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, Statistical Page; On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15; <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonnel demographics.asp>.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, Statistical Page; On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15; <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonnel demographics.asp>.

an especially high number of female rated officers separate. I would like to argue that many of these women would stay if they had more options for family balance and for positively impacting the world. At the 12 year point women have accomplished great feats and have mastered critical skill sets. These officers are Majors who have completed pilot training, are seasoned leaders, are experts in their field and are making a huge impact for our Nation. The USAF has 678 female pilots, 292 navigators and 228 air battle managers.<sup>16</sup> The RAND corporation's 2013 data depicts women's non-rated officer retention rate at approximately 50 percent at the 6.5-year mark, whereas non-rated males reached this retention rate at the 10-year mark. Rated females retention decreases 40 percent from 7-12 years of service, whereas rated males do not reach this level of attrition until the 20-year mark.<sup>17</sup> The below table represents the 19% of female officers who begin their career and how the decline continues.



**Figure 3. Female Force Composition, by Grade, in 2012<sup>18</sup>**

<sup>16</sup>Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, Statistical Page; On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15; <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonneldemographics.asp>.

<sup>17</sup> Nelson Lim, Louis T. Mariano, Amy G. Cox, David Schulker, Lawrence M. Hanser, *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps*, RAND Corporation, 2014, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3.

“There are notable differences in men’s and women’s continuation rates. Through the first 14 years of service, continuation rates for women are always lower than those for men.”<sup>19</sup> Survey information shows women are leaving the force primarily because of compatibility with spouses career; personal/family circumstances, the excessive number of deployments and the high dwell ratio.

### **Work-Life Balance Options to Aid in Retention**

The USAF work-life balance should be a relatively easy area to change to create a positive impact. Recently, the USAF announced intentions to extend post-pregnancy deployment deferment up to 12-months vice 6- months for new moms. This is critical for the stability of the family. However, we also need to consider the same for new parents who are making the choice to adopt who also need critical bonding time with a new child. In the beginning of February 2016 the USAF announced an increase to maternity leave of an additional six weeks for a total possible maternity leave of up to 12 weeks. To support this strong move, a London based report “on education and social mobility, ... found that infants under the age of three who do not form strong bonds with their mothers or fathers are more likely to be aggressive, defiant and hyperactive as adults.”<sup>20</sup> Another key area which needs to be addressed is that of join-spouse military families, where both spouses are serving in the military. There over 16,200 join-spouses, officers and enlisted females in the USAF and the Service should consider providing improved

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>20</sup> B. Rose Huber, “Four in 10 infants lack strong parental attachments,” Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs Posted March 27, 2014; 01:30 p.m., <https://www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S39/59/37A89/index.xml?section=topstories>.

assignment considerations to keep the family together, communicating more and earlier with join-spouse couples and the career field managers.<sup>21</sup>

Further, the USAF also needs to invest in more stability for military families who wish to stay in a geographical area longer. There are several bases in which Airmen can continue to professionally progress while adding stability to family life. This geographic stability can save critical permanent change of station budget funds. Consider a “Geographic Stabilization Model” in which the USAF changes “old model” promotion thinking of multiple permanent change of station’s and deployments to an acceptable option of geographic stability. This could enable greater support network development at home especially in high deployment ops tempo careers and positively affect retention.

A huge win for the USAF was the development of the Career Intermission Pilot Program in 2014. In its first year 32 Airmen participated, and in 2015, 40 Airmen participated. While this is a relatively new program it has proven to be a great opportunity for a sabbatical. There is concern by many of falling behind peers in regard to an individual’s career path, but if the USAF really wants to retain Airmen who need a break to continue to perform at an optimum level, this program should not harm your career aspirations, time will show the results. Faculty from the University of Idaho stated sabbaticals “allow for rejuvenation, reflection, fresh perspectives, opportunity for development of new professional relationships, staying current in his or her discipline...”<sup>22</sup> The USAF must continue to encourage these options and show our members they will not suffer professionally from taking sabbaticals.

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<sup>21</sup> Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, Statistical Page; On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15; <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonnel demographics.asp>.

<sup>22</sup> Linda R. Otto and Michael Kroth, “An Examination of the Benefits and Costs of Sabbatical Leave for General Higher Education, Industry, and Professional-Technical/Community College Environments” University of Idaho, Volume 48 Number 3, 2011 (Idaho), 28.

Another area in which the USAF must strive for improvement is in the Total Force. The “Total Force” concept is an inclusive term to combine the efforts, in various areas, of the active, reserve and guard components into a more cohesive USAF, instead of three separate entities often repeating numerous functions. Through this Total Force effort progress must be made to ease the transitions and options to switch between the active, guard and reserve components. If the USAF were willing to allowing members to take a Reserve or Guard position and then easily return to Active service at a later time, if desired, this would be a great boost to retention.

There are also a few easy wins the USAF can take advantage of. In March 2015 the Secretary of the Air Force announced a rated height screening initiative to change ROTC height restrictions for pilot candidates. Currently 37 percent of female ROTC cadets are eliminated based on height restrictions.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, in the realm of work-life balance the USAF can support more teleworking options. The general culture of the USAF is one of working long hours and being at your workstation or duty place. The culture needs to be more accepting of providing “benefits” through various options such as flex-schedules, telecommuting and job-sharing. The growth and robust nature of the internet allows many options to work from home, certainly a benefit for new mothers, fathers, and single parents.

Another side of the female retention issue is that of intrinsic service impact. “Resolution

1325 was made possible by an incredible three-pronged effort of Security Council members, United Nations entities and civil society. In joining together, they produced a text that resonates with women around the world. However, despite the progress made in the normative framework, implementation, action on the ground and accountability, are lagging behind. The participation of women at

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<sup>23</sup> Stephen Losey . “Air Force secretary's diversity plan will mean quotas, critics say.” *Air Force Times*. March 9, 2015 . <http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/careers/air-force/2015/03/09/air-force-secretary-deborah-lee-james-opportunities-women-minorities-and-enlisted-airmen/24505205/>.

decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes is far from sufficient and unacceptable levels of impunity for wartime atrocities continue.”<sup>24</sup>

Most members who join the US military have a strong desire to serve; to serve our Nation and protect our American values. Some of our most valuable assets in the USAF, are the rated community, those who fly aircraft. If women are leaving at certain points at a rate of 40 percent more than men, its trouble. I would like to argue that adding additional positive impact to their service could foster change. Right now the USAF trains Airmen to fly, fight and win our Nation’s battles, but after the 10-12 year point in a career, officers have completed the time required to serve for pilot training. Some officers are put in leadership jobs and some rotated to staff jobs, but what if the USAF trained Airmen to impact the world in a new way? There are very real world issues dealing with women, peace and security and numerous tangential areas which impact this arena.

### **Future Leaders**

Today less than 1 percent of the USAF General Officers are female, 18 out of 292.<sup>25</sup> and there were no female GO’s selected on the 2014 Brigadier General board. There are 10 female major generals and only three one-star brigadier general officers. So for all the hype of equality and diversity women are not being promoted to leadership positions as fast as men. Additionally of the 2,418 Chief Master Sergeants, the highest enlisted grade for the USAF, 331 are females, 13 percent.<sup>26</sup> Having jobs that develop skills in the international environment will enable women

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<sup>24</sup> Maria Butler, Kristina Mader and Rachel Kean; “Women, Peace, and Security Handbook: Compilation and Analysis of United Nations Security Council Resolution Language 2000-2010,” *Publication of the PeaceWomen Project of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)*, October 2010, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Department of Defense, *USAF General Officer Management*. USAF General Officers Roster as of November 21, 2015. <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/globalTab.do?channelPageId=s6925EC13371A0FB5E044080020E329A9&command=org>

<sup>26</sup> Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, Statistical Page; *Air Force Enlisted Demographics for October 2015, Year Groups by Rank, by Gender*, On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15,

to be more competitive for positions of higher leadership. Of the officers in the grade of Lieutenant Colonel and below, 55 percent of the female officers are line officers; 45 percent are non-line, meaning more of the USAF women serve in an operational role vice non-line officers who are our lawyers, chaplains and medical officers.<sup>27</sup> The benefit of training for international impact can not only improve the nations the USAF assists but will create better thinkers for tomorrow's force.

### **US Involvement in Women, Peace and Security**

The intrinsic desire to serve is a call so deep that it can lead to great change. So if the Air Force can capitalize on the desire to serve and then provide an avenue in which women can bring about profound change internationally, that is a force to be reckoned with. Maya Angelou once wrote "I come as one, but I stand as 10,000 to the 10th power". USAF women can impact other nations in the very same way. There are significant operational benefits to women involved in conflicts. For example, in the current war in Afghanistan "...women have been able to build relationships and trust with Afghan women, see things through their eyes, and to gain valuable insights that our operations would not have gained without them."<sup>28</sup>

Women Peace and Security is an initiative for equal and full participation of women. In October 2000 the United Nations began adding rigor to this effort through resolution 1325, and six supporting UN Security Council resolutions—1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122 which are a series of commitments to women's rights. Resolution 1325 is an 18-point document,

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[http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?\\_program=DEMOGPUB.static\\_reports.sas&\\_service=pZ1pub1&\\_debug=0](http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?_program=DEMOGPUB.static_reports.sas&_service=pZ1pub1&_debug=0).

<sup>27</sup> Department of Defense, Air Force Personnel Center, *Air Force Officer Career Field Stats for October 2015*, Statistical Page; On-Line, accessed 19 Oct 15, [http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?\\_program=DEMOGPUB.static\\_reports.sas&\\_service=pZ1pub1&\\_debug=0](http://access.afpc.af.mil/vbinDMZ/broker.exe?_program=DEMOGPUB.static_reports.sas&_service=pZ1pub1&_debug=0).

<sup>28</sup> Department of Defense, ADM Mike Mullen, *Women on the Front Lines of Peace and Security*, NDU Press. (Washington DC), 4.



approved in October of 2000 which focused on “four inter-related thematic areas: 1. participation of women at all decision-making levels and in peace processes 2. inclusion of gender training in peacekeeping operations 3. protection of the rights of girls and women and 4. gender mainstreaming in the UN’s reporting and implementation systems.”<sup>29</sup> The resolution called for international agencies and nations involved in armed conflict to develop plans supporting this resolution. From this, the United States immediately created the National Action Plan (NAP) for Women Peace and Security in December 2011.

The US NAP divides responsibilities between the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, each with responsibility for the NAP as proclaimed by President Barack Obama in his Executive Order, signed on December 19, 2011. The general requirements of the executive order require each responsible agent to identify and develop activities and initiatives in the following areas: (a) national integration and institutionalization; (b) participation in peace processes and decision making; (c) protection from violence; (d) conflict prevention; and (e) access to relief and recovery as these all apply to women and girls.<sup>30</sup> The US is one of 43 countries with a NAP. Specific to the Department of Defense the NAP requires responsiveness on a few critical aspects. This is specifically where the military can engage more robustly and generate greater progress.

In April of 2012 Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, referring to the NAP, acknowledged “the important strides DoD has made towards these objectives, we will ensure that DoD effort to implement the National Action Plan expand on, or improve current activities, while reflecting

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<sup>29</sup> Jackie Kirk and Suzanne Taylor, “UN Security Council Resolution 1325” Source: Forced Migration Review, Date: March 1, 2007. 1. [www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR27/06.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR27/06.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Barack Obama, “Executive Order 13595, -- Instituting a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security” 19 Dec 2011; The White House; Office of the Press Secretary <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/19/executive-order-instituting-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security>

our continued commitment to fiscal discipline.”<sup>31</sup> Subsequently in September 2013 the Department of Defense created an Implementation Guide. “The NAP identifies 18 representative actions for DoD. All DoD Components, at a minimum, shall incorporate, monitor, and evaluate the outcomes and actions listed in the NAP, and report progress annually to the DoD. This is essential to enabling effective coordination of these efforts.”<sup>32</sup> The 18 DoD actions grow from 11 “Outcomes” developed from the Presidents Executive Order. These 11 Outcomes are: (see Figure 4)<sup>33</sup>

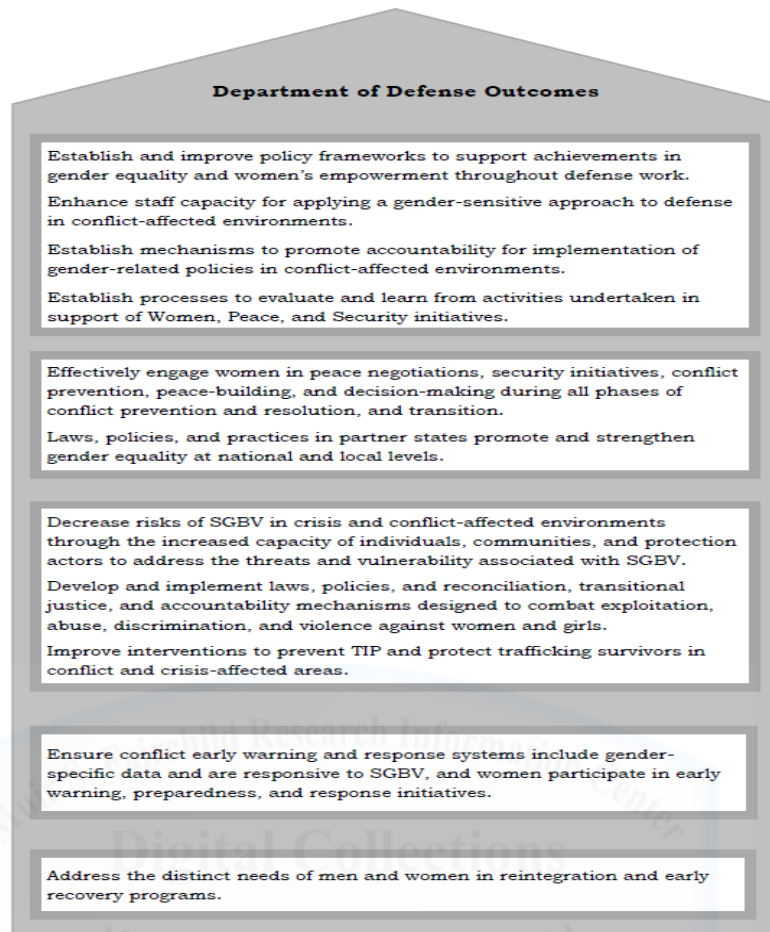


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<sup>31</sup> Secretary of Defense, Leon Pannetta, Department of Defense Memo on the National Action Plan to Secretaries of the Military Departments, 5 April 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Implementation Guide for the U.S. National Action Plan On Women, Peace, and Security*, September 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Implementation Guide for the U.S. National Action Plan On Women, Peace, and Security*, September 2013.



**Figure 4. DOD National Action Plan Outcomes<sup>34</sup>**

The DoD has made great strides to incorporate the Outcomes and Actions to bring about tangible results. For example there have been changes to strategic and planning documents in theater country campaign plans; continued annual training for sexual assault prevention and response, human rights and trafficking in persons; and working groups have been established at the Joint Staff, Headquarters staff and Combatant Commands. Further, DoD has partnered with other nations to conduct symposiums, establish Women, Peace and Security Fellows programs, and participated in National Guard State Partnership Programs.

### **International Impact in Women, Peace and Security**

<sup>34</sup> Department of Defense, Department of Defense Implementation Guide for the U.S. National Action Plan On Women, Peace, and Security, September 2013.

There is clear success for nation states with women involved in leadership. Yet, in the past two decades, women's representation in major peace negotiation delegations averaged only 9 percent. Only 4 percent of the signatories in these peace processes were women.<sup>35</sup> The involvement of women in national security and foreign policy has shown to have clear advantages. For example, the International Peace Institute "found that women's participation in peace negotiations, whether holding seats at the negotiating table or as political leaders, benefits the longevity of a peace agreement, making it 20 percent more likely to last at least two years and 35 percent more likely to last 15."<sup>36</sup> This is very interesting to the US as we will "have spent an estimated \$4-6 trillion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and [we are] engaged in a \$9.9 million per-day open-ended air war against the Islamic State. Other studies have found that a higher number of women in senior government positions is correlated with lower levels of corruption and increased economic competitiveness of a country."<sup>37</sup> There is a critical need for the military to involve women in leadership in countries engaged in conflict. As the DoD works to translate principles into practice, success will be found.

Women in the peace process leads to success. "If donor agencies are to address gender inequality in fragile states in a systematic and comprehensive way, they need to start by getting the language right and ensuring that commitments to gender equality are not only articulated but

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<sup>35</sup> Department of Defense, *Women on the Front Lines of Peace and Security*, NDU Press. (Washington DC), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Micah Zenko, Amelia Mae Wolf, "Leaning From Behind, The troubling lack of women in the world of foreign-policy making and media." *Foreign Policy* (25 September 2015), Accessed 7 Oct 15. On-Line. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/24/leaning-from-behind-women-foreign-policy-media/>.

<sup>37</sup> Micah Zenko, Amelia Mae Wolf, "Leaning From Behind, The troubling lack of women in the world of foreign-policy making and media." *Foreign Policy* (25 September 2015), Accessed 7 Oct 15. On-Line. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/24/leaning-from-behind-women-foreign-policy-media/>.

also become part of political practice.”<sup>38</sup> This means involving women from the beginning, but not just to get the language correct. One must be careful that the WPS Resolutions which prioritize the advancement of “women's interests” in peace and security do not override the actual presence of women in peace and security decision-making. When the Lusaka Protocol was signed, Donald Steinberg, who was serving as President Clinton’s advisor for Africa, supported negotiations to end two decades of civil war in Angola which killed a half million people. He stated “I boasted that not a single provision in the agreement discriminated against women. ‘The agreement is gender-neutral,’ I said in a speech.”<sup>39</sup> Steinberg went on to say it took “weeks after my arrival in Luanda to realize that a peace agreement that is “gender-neutral” is, by definition, discriminatory against women and thus, less likely to succeed.” In his speech in March 2009 he went on to say:

“Consider the evidence. First, the agreement did not require the participation of women in the Joint Commission itself. As a result, at each meeting of this body, forty men and no women sat around the table. This imbalance silenced women’s voices on the hard issues of war and peace, and meant that issues as internal displacement, sexual violence, human trafficking, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and the rebuilding of maternal health care and girls’ education were generally ignored.”<sup>40</sup>

It is clear in the lessons learned from Lusaka Protocols, from an African civil, war that no female involvement equates to significantly less success.

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<sup>38</sup> Rebecca Tiessen, “Gender essentialism in Canadian foreign aid commitments to women, peace, and security,” *International Journal*, 70.1 (Mar 2015): 84-100. (AUL)

<sup>39</sup> Donald Steinberg, “OSCE Round Table on Gender and Security, Vienna, Austria Peace Missions and Gender Equality: Ten Lessons from the Ground”. *International Crisis Group*. (11 Mar 2009). <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/commentary/peace-missions-and-gender-equality-ten-lessons-from-the-ground.aspx>.

<sup>40</sup> Donald Steinberg, “OSCE Round Table on Gender and Security, Vienna, Austria Peace Missions and Gender Equality: Ten Lessons from the Ground”. *International Crisis Group*. (11 Mar 2009). <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/commentary/peace-missions-and-gender-equality-ten-lessons-from-the-ground.aspx>.

USAF women involved in local communities can encourage women to greater heights, to greater involvement in their own community and involvement in their governments. When a military begins the initial stages of rebuilding, USAF women can have an impact. There are definite benefits through mentorship, encouragement and guidance of the local women and processes which can lead to second and third order effects. The female Combat Support Teams and the USMC Female Engagement Teams provide perfect examples. The USAF must use similar resources early in the conflict and as the rebuilding process is initiated, so that when a reconstruction effort is turned over to the Department of State and the USAID, there are women who participated in the process from the beginning, and they are not an afterthought.

## **Recommendations**

### **What Needs to be Done!?**

The UN, the international community, the US, including the DoD, recognize the need and benefit of promoting “women’s participation in conflict prevention, management, and resolution as well as in post-conflict relief and recovery, advances peace, national security, economic and social development, and international cooperation.”<sup>41</sup> There must be progress in two primary categories; first USAF recruiting and retention must increase, and secondly there must be development of training and assignment actions for international impact. Recruiting must be intentional to women and minority communities. Further, we must introduce our nation’s youth to the military early as so many today no longer have direct contact with the military or a military family member. Another important consideration to examine is how the USAF prepares women for leadership positions. As well as consideration to if the USAF allows

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<sup>41</sup> Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Implementation Guide for the U.S. National Action Plan On Women, Peace, and Security*, September 2013. 2.

for female rated operators to be successful and have a family. ROTC is the most diverse commissioning source, therefore it is imperative to continue to bolster ROTC and not to cut budgets and personnel. In FY07-14 ROTC commissioned the highest percentage of females of all commissioning sources. In fact in fiscal year 2014 the ROTC commissioning consisted of 25.05 percent female officers.<sup>42</sup> As previously mentioned, efforts in family and work-life balance changes, allowing for quick inter-component transfers, and teleworking and supporting sabbatical programs will all help improve USAF diversity.

**USAF Source Of Commissioning as of 31 December 2015:**

42.7% commissioned through Reserve Officer Training Corps

22.8% commissioned through the Air Force Academy

17.1% commissioned through Officer Training School

17.4% commissioned through other sources (direct appointment, etc.)

Source: Air Force Personnel Demographics,

<http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonnel demographics.asp>

Current military members also need to encourage our youth to join the military. Parents are a critical factor for youth, especially as they consider their future plans. Many studies have found that parents define their role is an advisory one. In this capacity they allow their children to make their own life decisions while providing input and guidance to ensure they consider all opportunities. “A Department of Defense survey last November, the latest, shows that only 25 percent of parents would recommend military service to their children, down from 42 percent in August 2003.”<sup>43</sup> Lower numbers of military veterans and a lack of “touch-points” with military members distances the youth population from considering military service, and parents are not suggesting it as an option to their children.

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<sup>42</sup> Briefing, AFOTC/CC, subject: SOC Comparison and AFOTC Diversity Issues and Initiatives, 11 March 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Damien Cavjune, “Growing Problem for Military Recruiters: Parents,” *New York Times*, 3 June 2005, [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/03/nyregion/growing-problem-for-military-recruiters-parents.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/03/nyregion/growing-problem-for-military-recruiters-parents.html?_r=0)

However, interesting enough “Millennials” “make up the majority of the military, representing 71% of those in active duty, with almost half of all those serving in active duty 25 years old or younger.”<sup>44</sup> Many believe the stereotype that millennials are lazy and don’t want to conform or don’t care about our country. In fact in this generation was raised while the US has been involved in two major combat operations stating they join the military because they see a better future, additionally they are “more supportive of international collaboration than other generations.”<sup>45</sup> This desire for impact can be profound as we seek to improve women, peace and security internationally.

For increased international impact the USAF must increase established liaisons with Department of State and USAID. The USAF can also increase the deployment of female USAF advisors on senior staffs in conflict; as well as provide males gender expertise to aid in educating local men on appropriate gender roles. For example the Dutch NAP states “[s]ecuring male understanding and support for UNSCR 1325 is crucial for its effective implementation. One way to achieve this is to broaden the conception of gender by including a masculinities perspective on peace and security. Investing in male allies (e.g. through training) is important, as it has been shown to increase the involvement of this vital section of civil society. Male allies are in a position to reach out to other men.”<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the USAF can “further integration of a

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<sup>44</sup> The G Brief, “Saluting Millennials, A Military Generation” *The G Brief*, November 11, 2015 <http://thebrief.com/articles/saluting-millennials-a-military-generation-579>.

<sup>45</sup> The G Brief, “Saluting Millennials, A Military Generation” *The G Brief*, November 11, 2015 <http://thebrief.com/articles/saluting-millennials-a-military-generation-579>

<sup>46</sup> Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Women: Powerful Agents for Peace and Security-Dutch National Action Plan (2012-2015) for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security,” (The Hague: (Netherlands) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012), 24.



gender perspective in military assessments, intelligence, planning operations and reporting”<sup>47</sup> In conflict zones, or areas where the military is involved, the military can establish immediate dialog with local females to establish communications, much like the Combat Support Teams and Female Engagement Teams.

In September of 2014 NATO approved the Education and Training Plan for Gender in Military Operations. The US could seek to conduct training with the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations. In addition to educational training the USAF should explore including gender based crisis scenarios in exercises, preparing our US warfighters to respond to conflict related sexual violence. In March 2015, for example NATO conducted a Crisis Management Exercise (CMX15) which involved a gender violence element. “The exercise [was] designed to test the ... procedures at the strategic political-military level. It involve[d] civilian and military staffs in Allied capitals, at NATO Headquarters and in both Operations and Transformation Strategic Commands. The exercise rehearses decision-making processes using an entirely fictitious scenario.”<sup>48</sup> In fact this exercise displays a critical point as written in the 2010 UN guidelines for integrating a gender perspective in military peacekeeping which states that “the military may be the first point of contact for victims of domestic violence, in situations where they are providing medical services.”<sup>49</sup> While the UN guidelines are specific to peacekeeping it does not negate the reality that US military forces may encounter a very similar situation in a conflict zone, or be advising a nation state with gender violence.

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<sup>47</sup> Marriët Schuurman, “NATO and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Time to Bring It Home,” NATO’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, Vol XIV, Nr 3, (Summer 2015). 2 [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_124032.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_124032.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>48</sup> NATO Press Release: “NATO conducts Annual Crisis Management Exercise (CMX) NATO to exercise decision-making in crisis – CMX15 to focus on maritime security” (March 2015), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_117862.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_117862.htm).

<sup>49</sup> Aiko Holvikivi, “What Role for the Security Sector? An SSR Approach to Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda”. *The Quarterly Journal*, Volume 14, Issue 3, (2015), 42.

These can be strong steps towards leadership decision making in combating the ever present element of sexual violence in conflict areas. The USAF, and any Service should, train for sexual violence, continue to prepare the military for initial expectations in nation building programs, identify how to utilize women in peace processes, and explore sabbaticals and/or fellowships with industry or international partners. The USAF can also increase personnel sent to DOS, as well as foster relationships with NGOs and other service training centers.

## **Conclusion**

The USAF needs to continue to address and promote gender issues, with increased emphasis on family-life improvements for recruiting and retention. Further, it is critical that our current military members seek opportunities to interact with civilians in their communities to foster increased interest in the military and the benefits of service especially to youth. Most importantly, with more robust efforts in the international women, peace and security environment women from the USAF can have an impact of greater magnitude. Gender issues must now move from institutionalization to increased action where women in the USAF can demonstrate relevance to the world. Efforts through joint exercises, senior advisor roles, gender specific training at the strategic level to understand gender impacts in nations of conflict, and increased liaison positions with other departments and countries is just the beginning. To quote Mayo Angelou again “how important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes!” The value which women bring to the international environment for women, peace and security has been clearly displayed. Let’s work to increase the opportunities for women in the USAF to impact women everywhere with positive examples of leadership to drive sustained improvement around the world.

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